



# Moderators' Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

January 2024

Pearson Edexcel Extended Project Qualification in  
Artefact (P304)

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## **Grade Boundaries**

Grade boundaries for all papers can be found on the website at:

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## Student Performance

We continue to see very impressive work at the top the range and learners achieving high marks for all assessment objectives. This is perhaps because of experienced centres and very dedicated learners pursuing projects linked to their personal passions and progression plans. There is a sense that P304 is used as a 'niche' qualification for learners with a high level of skills and interest in specific area. There is growth of STEM entries, with high attainment.

There were again few examples of very low marks. In general, the learners that are entered plan, research, develop and produce an artefact.

The unit is accessible to learners of differing ability and larger cohorts included a range of marks.

## Suitability of work submitted

In fitting with the ethos of the unit, learners presented a very wide range of suitable design and artefact outcomes. Projects submitted included examples of software design, architecture, product design, engineering, literary, photography, film, music technology, visual art, AI and textiles outcomes.

Most learners submitted individual projects. When group projects were submitted, the individual evidence was clear.

Most centres supported learners to develop proposals that necessitated a clear research phase. Most of the work sampled reflected the Guided Learning Hours of the qualification.

On the whole learners submitted appropriate proposals and evidence for the Artefact unit. There were a few instances of learners not defining and focusing on an artefact outcome from the outset. **There was very occasional entry of more ephemeral outcomes that could have been better conceived as P303 (Performance) projects.**

Sometimes the planning and the structure of the supporting materials were better suited to a Dissertation outcome. In these instances, sometimes less effective evidence was presented in the form of an essay/dissertation/literature review with the later addition of an artefact. This could be because centres are modelling a response for a Dissertation as part of the taught course. Therefore, centres are advised to ensure they guide learners to produce appropriate evidence for the demands of the Artefact unit.

Some centres are 'over' evidencing this unit and providing large portfolios that exceed the recommended word count. Information was repeated in different sections of the portfolio. This had a negative impact as the portfolio overall was less coherent and supporting materials less clear.

Generally, learners developed a suitable initial design or commission brief and/or specification. This enabled them to focus effectively on the design and production of their artefact. There were very good example of learner working to 'real' industry commissions. There was a tendency for those who focused their work on a question to focus disproportionately on an issue, problem or theme rather than the research, methods and materials required to develop and produce an artefact.

Highly refined initial briefs offered learners the greatest opportunity. Where consideration was given to specifics such a style, medium, influence, purpose, materials, genre, user-group etc. learners were able to plan, research, develop and evaluate with all these in mind. Examples of more focused initial titles/design briefs included:

- *The £5 camera. To produce an open-source, functional, re-usable film camera. It should take standard 35mm film cannisters, should focus with lens (rather than a pinhole) and should feature a shutter mechanism to expose each image. The target market will be established through primary and secondary research.*

*A 'real' commission from a workplace design company - Consider an electronic alternative to a tag system for work-at-height equipment using the best available technology and not entailing excessive cost.*

- *Create original illustrations for a known Childrens' book (considering the relationship of the images to text and accessibility issues. Informed by the work of others).*

Most centres included the required Project Proposal Form and Activity Logs on the Pearson proformas.

Stronger responses often recognised the validity of documenting relevant primary research including the development of technical skills and research into existing similar products/designs.

There is a trend to produce more formal supporting materials giving a retrospective account of the project and/or a 'defence' for the design. This often clearly developed learners' skills for progression. Less formal supporting materials were also very effective and captured the 'live' process. They were in the most appropriate form for the artefact outcome (e.g. annotated sketchbooks or design portfolios). Centres should be confident to reward this type of evidence when it meets the assessment criteria. Detailed Activity/Production Logs also often provided effective evidence for all objectives.

The switch to electronic evidence sometimes impacted on the quality of the evidence of the final artefact. There were instances of centres not initially submitting evidence of the final artefact or only providing poorer quality images that did not necessarily show the artefact being used/displayed as intended. It is good practice to include filmed evidence of the artefact in use,

where appropriate. Some centres made good use of PowerPoint to include images from the design portfolios in their supporting materials.

Links to filmed outcomes hosted on external platform, did not always work and sometimes the moderator did not have access rights. QR codes where used were more successful.

Most centres recognised the need to provide evidence of both presentation skills and review. Oral Presentation Record Forms were also provided and mostly fully completed with mark band placement and commentary. There is no need to repeat information on Oral Presentation and Observation Records.

More centres provided recordings of the presentations this series. There is no explicit requirement to do this, and they did not always provide additional evidence. Centres could identify on the Candidate Record Sheet if these have been included to provide additional evidence (e.g. for AO2 or AO3, or for the review element of AO4).

## **Assessment Evidence**

### **AO1**

Some Project Proposals were very detailed, with all sections on the form completed fully. Proposals were particularly effective when they included a detailed breakdown of the activities that would be completed with the time allocated to each section clearly identified. Sometimes very generic main activities were listed, with more consideration of completing paperwork, than planning and managing the research and development of a specific artefact. It was quite common to see multiple re-drafted Project Proposals that provided further detail and justifications for the project intentions. These provided effective evidence. Most proposals also demonstrated refinement rather than just a 'first draft' approach. Some plans were very brief, and this provided weaker evidence for AO1.

Activity Logs provided stronger evidence for AO1 when they were detailed, reflective and included commentary on how the process was managed. When AO1 was over-rewarded initial proposals and time planning were less detailed and focused than the mark suggested. Where there was slight lenience, it was also often due to more limited and narrative records of activities. Less effective Activity Logs included brief and limited, often weekly or monthly entries. When learners simply identified the activities they had completed there was less to reward. References to any problems and how they were keeping 'on track' and meeting initial timescales and deadlines tended to be less frequent.

Better assessment considered the full range of marks in the top band and the planning documentation as well as the learner's independence and overall management of the project.

## **AO2**

There were examples of excellent primary and secondary research being conducted and used effectively. The initial research included existing products, the issue to be addressed or the needs of the client, different software, equipment or materials and different techniques that could be used. On-going research also informed the iterative design and development process. In some examples where evidence was less strong, learners conducted more arbitrary desk-top research around a theme.

The research was sometimes 'narrower' than the centre mark suggested, leading to lenient assessment. Sometimes there was over-evidencing of AO2, to the detriment of time spent on the development and realisation of the Artefact (AO3).

Literature reviews are often provided. These were useful where learners were able to clearly relate their findings or relevance of a source to their own intentions. Lack of analysis of information in relation to the planned artefact led to lenient assessment. This tended to also lead to less focus on the investigation into 'materials and techniques' that is demanded by the P304 mark scheme.

Primary research was often very pertinent, but not all centres seemed to encourage it. This approach was very useful for artefact projects when learners could use information from visits, workshops, interviews, online tutorials, experiments and testing to inform the development processes in AO3.

Some learners did not reference consistently within their work or produce a bibliography which provided less evidence for AO2, as the bibliography is part of the marking criteria in all mark bands. There was sometimes a lack of awareness of the need to cite the sources of images used in the supporting material or indeed the final artefact.

## **AO3**

At the top end students demonstrated a high level of technical skill and produced very successful outcomes. There was evidence of genuine innovation as students created new artworks, designs and products.

The strongest evidence for AO3 was provided by learners who had produced a highly successful artefact that was supported by detailed evidence of how the artefact was produced. Some learners produced highly successful artefacts, but the evidence of the developmental process was much less strong. In the best examples, learners produced detailed commentary on the different processes they had completed including the problems they had encountered and the solutions they had used to overcome them. This was often further supported by detailed justification for the different decisions they had taken as artefacts were refined during the process. This sort of commentary provided strong evidence for AO3. Detailed Activity /

Production Logs sometimes effectively captured the alternative and evolving designs, as well as the application of the researched processes and materials.

Many learners produced a report/essay and although not always the best approach to show development, these were generally appropriate and also informed the evaluations in AO4. When learners provided a retrospective account of the process, it could often have been supported by more detailed on-going recording of the process in the Activity Log. This could provide the opportunity to capture key developmental decisions, the selection and rejection of alternative ideas and the refinement of the artefact. Visual evidence was highly useful to support this assessment objective, such as annotated design work, screenshots of software development, drawing /sketches as ideas evolved etc.

Some centres presented very brief if any supporting materials. This led to more significant lenience in the assessment of criteria related to the learners' understanding of the development process and consideration of alternatives.

There was sometimes lenience in the assessment of AO3 when shorter development and realisation phases did not reflect the increased weighting allotted to this objective. There was less recognition of the necessity for learners to undertake and document a multistage development process and interrogate alternatives, before refining the outcome through test pieces or prototypes. More limited marks were justifiable when learners did not show evidence of the consideration of alternative ideas and proceeded quickly with one straight-forward initial idea.

At the top-end, the accurate use of technical language and explanation of underlying principles, concepts and techniques suggested more thorough understanding.

Learners continue to sometimes erroneously present background research essays into the theme of their project, rather than an on-going narrative of the creative journey towards the production of their artefact.

Some centres appear to be over-rewarding the outcome. This was particularly the case when there was less evidence of the process presented in the supporting materials.

## **AO4**

There was evidence that very nearly all learners had presented their project outcomes. A presentation to the group was the most popular format and this sometimes provided weaker learners the opportunity to also generate evidence for AO2 and AO3.

Oral Presentation Records and copies of PowerPoint presentation slides were usually included. Where there was slight leniency against AO4, centre assessors could often better consider the full range of marks in the top band. The quality of review tended to be over-rewarded. Learners did not always include valid recommendations for improvements or future practice.

At the top end, high-level review and insight was embedded throughout the portfolio. More detailed written summative review tended to enable learners to demonstrate the top band criteria.

### **Centre Performance**

Most centres were accurate or slightly lenient in their assessment of P304. There were not any inconsistently marked centres this series. It was clear that many learners had been very well supported by experienced and newer centres who are confident with the assessment process. It was pleasing to see that in all centres, the project was being completed as an independent piece of work with learners having the freedom to pursue an area of interest to them, and a suitable platform to extend their skills for progressions.

Where there was more lenient assessment, top band marks were awarded, rather than the full range of marks being considered across all objectives. This particularly was an issue in AO3, and because of the increased weighting of this objective it was more likely to result in a mark adjustment.

AO3 was most likely to be leniently assessed; when the content and/or outcome reflected band 2 rather than band 3.

Sometimes, the required 'best-fit' approach was not used. This was apparent when a mark was placed high in a band, despite assessor comments accurately highlighting where the evidence met lower band descriptors.

There was generally clear evidence of the internal moderation of marks, but sometimes when mark had been raised, the original mark was more suitable. Comments from internal moderators justifying any amendment of centre marks supported the moderation process well.

Centres are advised to double check that the uploaded electronic evidence includes all items listed as Project Contents on the Candidate Record Sheet, as items were fairly frequently missing. Sometimes pages of key documents were missing. Centres should not provide photographs of individual pages of evidence but collate these as appropriate.

There were a few instances of incorrect mark entries, but these were usually resolved quickly.

Some centres did not upload a complete sample, including the work of the highest and lowest marked student. There was varied practice in the labelling of electronic documents and centres are advised to ensure they read the guidance.

Most centres linked their teacher assessor comments to the language of the assessment criteria on the Candidate Record Sheet as required, rather than providing personal qualitative judgments. Occasionally assessors used Dissertation, rather than Artefact Unit marking grid descriptors.

Centres are encouraged to ensure they access their E9 report, as this will enable them to address any issues and guard against the upward creep of marks.

Centres are commended for continuing to support the very wide-ranging interests of enthused learners.

